

**FORT PECK ASSINIBOINE & SIOUX TRIBES
TESTIMONY TO HOUSE BILL 396
TO THE SENATE FISH & GAME COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2013**

Mr. Chairman and committee members, My name is Robert Magnan I'm the Buffalo Manager for the Fort Peck Tribes, and I'm here today to oppose House Bill 396 for the following reasons.

In past testimonies from people who were in favor of this bill have stated that this bill DOES NOT EFFECT sovereign tribe's ability to obtain or raise buffalo in whatever manner they see fit. By giving the Board of County Commissioners authorization to approve or disapprove the release, transplant or relocation of buffalo into their counties will give them veto power, over the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Yellowstone National Park or the Montana Department of Livestock over agreements made with the tribes on translocation projects of any buffalo from the Greater Yellowstone Area to lands belonging to the tribes. The Fort Peck Indian Reservation have (4) four counties within their exterior boundaries . In most of these counties the tribes are the minority, which could weigh in heavily on the commissioners decision making . Their decisions could easily turn political, and not based on conservation or sound management plans. The state of Montana has seven (7) Indian Reservations within their boundaries and there are 15 counties within the these reservations. Giving these counties authority to allow or disallow any translocation of wild buffalo to tribes would further divide the relationship between Indian and non-Indian communities.

As one example I have a copy of the Glasgow Courier that is dated March 13, 2013 and is titled PERMITS FOR ALL BISON TO GRAZE IN COUNTY the article states" the Valley County Conservation District is considering an ordinance that would require a permit for grazing any bison, weather wild, free roaming or domestic, in the county. They are acting in response to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Park's placing of bison from Yellowstone Park on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation a year ago, an action that sparked a reaction from ranchers and farmers in the area".

In other testimonies from people who oppose any translocation have stated that Senate Bill 212 of the 2011 legislature does not work. The Fort Peck Tribes are living proof that it does work. On march 19, 2012 the tribes received 61 genetically pure Yellowstone Buffalo that were Brucellosis-free, after they had worked out an Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana. The Tribes do have a management plan, have built a wildlife friendly fence for them, worked out a agreement with the U. S. Department of Agriculture (APHIS) to do yearly testing to ensure these buffalo do not have Brucellosis. Region 6 of the Montana Fish, Wildlife works with the Tribes on quarterly quarantine buffalo reports on escapes, deaths, births and condition of the buffalo. Today marks a one (1) year anniversary that the Yellowstone Buffalo came home to the Fort Peck Reservation. During this past year the buffalo have never tore down their fence & escaped, cattle have never been effected with brucellosis & no trespassing complaints from local landowners.

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ange," Sundby said of such military functions. have stated previously, I would plan on being (Billings) airport earlier so you don't miss the (arrival). Charter flights can be early or late; you don't know. Also be aware that if there are any al issues, your service member could be held Texas."

e hundred twenty members of the 484th, which dquartered in Malta and includes members he Glasgow area, arrived safely in Fort Bliss to ue their demobilization process, the Guard aned Thursday. They were expected to complete ilization for 10 to 14 days. This Saturday would y 10.

e troops supported a mission to train Afghanistan al police for Operation Enduring Freedom start-June 2012.

e are very excited to have the soldiers of the Military Police Company safely back in the

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FOR THE COURIER

Capt. Fred Terry, the 484th's commander, salutes upon arrival from Afghanistan at Fort Bliss, Texas.

NWHILE, UP NORTH ...



Permits For All Bison To Graze In County?

Valley County
Conservation District
Considering it

BY SAMAR FAY
COURIER EDITOR

The Valley County Conservation District is considering an ordinance that would require a permit for grazing any bison, whether wild, free-roaming or domestic, in the county. They are acting in response to Fish, Wildlife and Park's placing of bison from Yellowstone National Park on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation a year ago, an action that sparked a reaction from ranchers and farmers in the area.

Local producers said they feared the spread of brucellosis and they said that bison are hard to contain in fences. The big animals destroy fields and haystacks when they get loose. Owners are liable for domestic bison, but there is no recourse for damage by wild bison. A group of ranchers and organizations filed a lawsuit to prevent any further translocation of wild Yellowstone bison without having a comprehensive statewide bison management plan in place. The Valley County commissioners joined this lawsuit.

The Valley County Conservation District's board of directors have a draft proposed ordinance based on an ordinance that was passed by voters in McCone County in the November general election.

The draft ordinance sets several requirements to obtain